

WATFORD NETBALL LEAGUE

CONSTITUTION & RULES

CONSTITUTION

Watford Netball League (WNL) Mission Statement

Established in 1974, our thriving competitive league is dedicated to empowering women of all ages and skill levels to excel in the dynamic sport of netball.

We foster a welcoming community that encourages camaraderie and growth, promoting a friendly and inviting atmosphere for all members to thrive and reach their full potential on and off the court.

1. The League shall be called "The Watford Netball League" and be a biological female player only league.
2. The League shall have a President who will be non-voting.

The League Officers, who must be affiliated to England Netball, shall be:

- (a) Chairman
- (b) League Secretary
- (c) League Treasurer
- (d) Fixtures Secretary
- (e) Umpiring representative
- (f) Safeguarding Officer

The League Officers shall have one vote each, unless they are representing a team at the meeting as stated in Section 4 in which case this will be their vote. In the event of a tie, the Chairman shall have the casting vote.

3. League Fees

The Registration Fee per team, per annum, will be approved at the AGM and a non-returnable deposit of £30 will be payable no later than the AGM. The balance of the Registration Fee must be received two weeks before the Start of Season meeting.

Non-payment of the full amount two weeks before the start of season meeting will result in either a penalty of 4 points per game outstanding or the team's place in the league being forfeited.

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4. Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Chairman shall conduct the AGM, and if not present, then the President.

The business of the AGM is to:

- a) Receive the Annual Report
- b) Approve the Accounts and Registration Fee.
- c) Approve any changes to the Constitution and Rules.
- d) Vote for the Officers, who can be re-elected each year.

The AGM shall be held within 3 months following the last match session of the season.

One (1) voting representative from EACH TEAM must be present at the AGM. Failure to do so will result in 4 points being deducted at the start of the next season.

5. Extra-ordinary General Meeting (EGM)

The Chairman shall conduct the EGM.

The Officers on behalf of the League shall convene an EGM either: -

- a) at the request, in writing, of a minimum of three affiliated clubs. The request must be signed by an official of each club.

or

- b) by order of the League Officers.

Each request for an EGM must state the purpose for which a meeting is required, and shall set out, in full, any resolution being sought.

The EGM shall be held within 60 days of receipt of the request by the League Secretary, and 30 days' notice of the EGM and any resolution proposed shall be given to every team entitled to vote.

One (1) voting representative from EACH TEAM must be present at the EGM. Failure to do so will result in 4 points being deducted.

6. Start of Season Meeting

The Start of Season Meeting shall be held prior to the first proposed fixture.

A representative for EACH Club must be present at the meeting. Failure to do so will result in 4 points being deducted.

The business of the Start of Season Meeting is:

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- (a) Confirm the Club/Team Contact Sheet(s) has been completed online.
- (b) Confirm the Team Signature Form has been completed online or will be completed on or before the first fixture along with England Netball Affiliation Roster from Engage. This enables the league, via the unique player ID number, to check each player is affiliated for the coming season and their registration type.
- (c) Confirm the Club is registered within Engage (England Netball's membership system) and to the Watford Netball League.
- (d) Cover off any other netball matters related to the league.
- (e) Confirm all Umpires known/likely to be umpiring details have been supplied to the league.

7. Amendments to the Constitution and Rules

Alterations to the Constitution can only be made at an AGM, and for Rules only at an AGM or EGM. Any suggested amendments must be sent to the League Secretary IN WRITING AT LEAST SIX (6) WEEKS BEFORE THE MEETING. A majority of 2/3 of those present will be necessary to pass any such amendments.

8. Netball Playing Rules

Games will be played in adherence to the current rules and directives of All England Netball Association (England Netball) and the Hertfordshire County Netball Association (Hertfordshire Netball). All teams must abide by the Constitution and the Rules herein.

9. Discipline

The Watford Netball League endorses the England Netball Code of conduct/Disciplinary Policy: www.EnglandNetball.co.uk/about-england-netball/Netball_Code_of_conduct.

Extracts for reference of the Code of Conduct for players, officials and coaches are on the WNL website.

10. Duty of Care

The League accepts the principles and core values of the England Netball Duty of Care guidelines: www.EnglandNetball.co.uk/make-the-game/safeguarding

11. Dissolution of the League

In the event of the dissolution of the League, all monies shall go to the Hertfordshire County Netball Association.

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12. Equity Policy Statement

This League is committed to ensuring equity is incorporated across all aspects of its development. In doing so it acknowledges and adopts the following Sport England definition of sports equity:

Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognizing inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society.

The League respects the rights, dignity and worth of every person and will treat everyone equally within the context of their sport, regardless of age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, religious belief, sexuality, or social/economic status.

The League is committed to everyone having the right to enjoy their sport in an environment free from threat of intimidation, harassment, and abuse.

All League members have a responsibility to oppose discriminatory behaviour and promote equality of opportunity. The League Officers will deal with any incidence of discriminatory behaviour.

RULES

1. Facilities for play

Matches will take place at a central venue on hard courts booked by the League.

2. Application for next season

League Registration forms must be submitted online with the appropriate non-returnable deposit by the date specified at the AGM. New teams wishing to enter the league must complete a registration form with the appropriate non-returnable deposit one week later than the date shown on the form.

3. Divisions

The number of teams entering the league will dictate the number of teams in a division with the aim to have at least 8 teams in a division. The Officers will make every attempt to provide a full schedule for all teams and have the discretion to reject applications if the need arises.

4. Teams

(a) Clubs may enter 1 or more teams; on the condition no players play down into a team of lower standard. Teams infringing this rule will be penalised by two (2) points per player every time it occurs. A club with more than 1 team must specify what team the player is in, e.g. 1st, 2nd and subsequent teams when signing them to the league.

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- (b) Playing up. Players may play up into the next higher standard team for up to 12 quarters in the season. On their 13th quarter that player is deemed a member of the next higher team within the league. If they have played up 13 quarters in the Herts League or any other higher league, they may no longer play down in the WNL. Infringement of this rule will be penalised by a two (2) point deduction per player on that game.
- (c) If the Club has more than two teams in the WNL the rule will apply to each team individually, so the 12 quarter, rule is reset once a player has moved up to the next highest team.
- (d) All teams must complete the Team Player form online and upload the England Netball Roster, on or before the first fixture of the season. Failure to do so will result in a four (4) point deduction per team for each fixture it is not submitted.
- (e) All teams must PRINT the full name of all players on the back of the scorecard for each game and indicate when a player has `played up` and for how many quarters. If a player has played up and there is no information on how many quarters have been played, then the player will be deemed as having played 4 quarters. A penalty of two (2) points per player will be deducted if their name is not on the back of the scorecard. This will occur even if the team involved lost the game.
- (f) Any unaffiliated player (see 5 below) will be penalised four (4) points per player.

5. Players

Players must be registered to the Watford Netball League (see 4(d)) and have full England Netball registration as required by England Netball for club league competition. They must have full England Netball Club affiliation before they play their first match

Players registered in the Herts League, or any other higher league, are not eligible to play in the League. Higher Leagues are county leagues (e.g. leagues that feed Regional Leagues) and upwards. A Franchise Performance Pathway is also considered to be a higher league.

Players can only be registered to one Watford Netball league club, except in (b) below.

- (a) Players will be 14 years of age or over unless they are playing within an U13 or U15 county development player programme in that season. There can be no more than three (3) Under 14 players per team and must be notified on the Team registration form. Once they attain 14 years, they are eligible to play providing they have full England Netball Club affiliation, and do not play in higher leagues elsewhere.

Player infringements -2 points per player on that game.

- (b) A player may change clubs within the League once only in any one season providing:
 - (i) They have informed their previous team
 - (ii) They notify the League in writing two (2) clear days before playing for their new club
 - (iii) They re-register with their new club
 - (iv) In the case of injury, illness, or pregnancy, if a player has not played for 3 consecutive matches she may, on production of a medical certificate or other

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suitable proof, play for a team of the same club in a lower division. Cancelled matches are not included in this calculation. The League Secretary must be notified in writing 7 days beforehand. This would also apply to Watford League clubs who have teams in the Herts League, or higher league.

- (v) If a Herts League player or a player from any higher league has not played in the Herts/higher League for 4 consecutive games, they can apply to play for a club in the Watford League, at the discretion of the Committee, but they then cannot play in the Herts /higher League for the rest of the season.

Any infringement -2 points on that game

- (c) Herts League, or any other higher league players, are not allowed to play down into the Watford League, except for when Rule 5(b)(v) applies.
- (d) Players joining a team after the first fixture must complete the online player form before the start of their first game and upload a revised England Netball roster.

Any infringement of the rules in section 5 (a), (b) or (c) will incur a deduction of two (2) points per player for the offending team every time it occurs.

An infringement of the rules in section 5 (d) will incur a deduction of four (4) points per player for the offending team every time it occurs.

They must have full England Netball Club affiliation before they play their first match.

- (e) Any player, who receives three (3) warnings or two (2) suspensions or one (1) ordered off in a season will receive a one match ban. If a player continues to re-offend the committee will investigate and may ban the player from the league.

6. Promotion and demotion

The bottom 2 teams in the higher division will change with the top 2 teams in the next lower division. In the event of teams withdrawing their place will be automatically filled in the next season by a team(s) moving up to maintain the required minimum.

The League Officers reserve the right to alter the two up two down if necessary.

In the event of a tie for promotion and demotion places it will be decided by goal difference. If still a tie it will be decided by goal average. Cancelled games will not count in the goal average.

7. Herts League teams

Former Watford League teams relegated from the lowest division of the Herts League may return to Watford League in a suitable vacancy at the discretion of Officers of the League. Former Watford League teams leaving the Herts League for other reasons may apply to re-join the Watford League on the same criteria as new teams.

8. Umpires

All umpires must be registered to England Netball.

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9. Provision of Umpires

No match can take place without 2 umpiring officials - see Rule 10 - and both must be either a qualified umpire or umpire who holds a current Into Officiating Award (IOA) Each team MUST provide one non-playing umpire for each match. In the event of no umpire being present and the team has a player who meets the qualification for that Division (see 10), that player MUST be dropped to umpire. If the team cannot supply an umpire, the game is FORFEITED, and the other team records a WIN.

If the umpire arrives late, the dropped player may enter the game after a goal has been scored but only into the position left free.

If an umpire is injured during the game a replacement umpire can take over provided, they meet the qualification level as specified below.

If the game is abandoned the following will apply:

- If more than 1/2 (two quarters) of the game has been completed, the result will stand. If the 2nd quarter has started it, it is considered completed in this instance.
- If less than 1/2 (two quarters) of the game has been played, the match will be abandoned, and the offending team is responsible for rearrangement of the match at a mutually convenient date at the cost to the team. If a date cannot be arranged then the non-offending team will be awarded 4 points and 20 goals, the offending team will not receive deduction points.

10. Qualified umpires

Teams of all divisions must provide an umpire for their game. The top 2 divisions must have a qualified umpire of C Award or above. The other divisions require an umpire with proof of having attended the online Into Officiating Course, (IOA). Proof of qualification should be available for inspection at all matches, along with the umpire's current affiliation number.

Into Officiating umpires can be mentored and tested on 2nd Division games.

The league will consider requests for Umpires to be tested for the C award on division one games.

Where an umpire is being mentored in 2nd Division games the mentor must be on the approved England Netball Mentor List and be present at the game. The mentor must be confident that the umpire is competent enough to maintain the standard of the game.

If a team takes the court without an appropriate umpiring official, then the game must be forfeited unless:

Divisions 1 & 2

If the team has a player who is a qualified C award or above umpire, they must officiate the game.

Divisions 3 & 4 below

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If the team has a player who has attended as a minimum the online IOA or has a higher qualification, they must officiate the game.

Should a team complete a fixture with an umpire who defaults on the above rule they will have four (4) points deducted.

- (a) All Umpires must have attended a Game Management course within the last two years if the courses have been available via Herts County. Proof of attendance is required. The league will accept attendance at online courses and other County Game Management courses. If an umpire has not attended a Game Management course in line with the above a 2 points deduction will be made.
- (b) If courses are held when new rules are introduced to the game, all umpires must have attended a course online or in person course. Proof of attendance is required. The league will accept attendance at online courses and other County Rules courses. If an umpire has not attended new rules course a 2-point deduction will be made.

If no Game Management/Rules courses are available or spaces limited in the Herts County/Online, then Umpires can continue to umpire until courses become available.

- (c) IOA's can umpire once they have completed their online IOA course. However, If, they have been an IOA for more than 2 years they must have attended a recent game management course. If an umpire in this position has not attended a recent Game Management Course a 2-point deduction will be made.
- (d) An umpire must remain neutral and not coach any player during the match or at quarter times.

11. Start of play

All games must start at the appointed time. All matches are started and stopped by the umpires. However, all games must be finished 10 minutes before the next game is due to start.

Once a team and an umpire are on court, timing for the first quarter will commence. No team may start with less than 5 players and an appropriate umpire – see Rules 9 and 10. If a team is late on court, the team present will be credited with 1 goal for every complete minute their opponents are late on court.

If the opponents have not arrived by the end of the first quarter, they forfeit the match, with 1 point deducted, if some players have arrived. If no players have arrived, it will be deemed a cancelled fixture and a six-point penalty will apply. This match will not count when calculating either team's goal difference or defence record. The umpires will note the result on the scorecard.

If after 15 minutes, due to unforeseen circumstances, a team has less than 5 players and an umpire, they will forfeit the game, but have right of appeal to the League Officers regarding the 1-point deduction. This appeal must be recorded by the umpires on the scorecard.

12. Scoring

4 points for a win; 2 for a draw; 1 to the losing team if the winning team's score is not more

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than 5 goals above that of the losing team.

At the season end, in the event of a draw on points, the result for League positions will be decided on goal difference. If still a draw, then goal average will be used.

We strongly recommend Umpires have a scorer. However, it is not mandatory. If only one umpire has a scorer that scorer must stand on the side of their umpire and call out clearly the score on their half. As a match official scorers cannot engage in the match play. Scorers can swap over at quarter time or revert to the Umpire to continue scoring.

13. Notification of results

It is the team's responsibility to ensure the scorecard is correct and:

- (a) It shows the correct result,
- (b) Players names are clearly PRINTED on the back of the scorecard and any players playing up are indicated, including the number of quarters played.
- (c) Both Umpires have PRINTED and signed their names and state their qualification level on both scorecards
- (d) If less than 7 players take to the court for the duration of a whole game, it should be marked on the Score Card to avoid points deduction.
- (e) The scorecard (front & back) is uploaded to the league's website site.

Any team failing to upload its scorecard on the day of the fixture, will be penalised with a two (2) point deduction regardless of the result.

14. Postponement, Cancellation and Abandonment of matches

Postponements are allowed for:

- (a) Extreme weather conditions, in which case the League Secretary will contact each club secretary, or team captain via What's App. and post on our Facebook page. If you are not on What's App it is your responsibility to notify the league secretary at the beginning of the season so we can make alternative arrangements to notify you.
- (b) The Officers will consider requests for postponement of matches in writing to the League Secretary, 4 weeks in advance, and before the last fixture. Postponed games should be re-arranged with the agreement of both teams, and played 4 weeks either side of the fixture, and the postponing team will be responsible for arranging the venue and cost.
- (c) If any team, for any reason, should cancel 3 or more fixtures throughout the season the Officers of the League will review their application for the following season.
- (d) Cancelled matches will incur a penalty of 4 points to the cancelling team. The cancellation must occur before 9 pm on the Friday prior to the Sunday match. Any cancellation or failure to turn up after this time will incur a penalty of 6 points in total.
- (e) In the event a fixture is cancelled on the original fixture date by one of the teams in accordance with rule 14(d) above and the fixture is subsequently cancelled by the

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League, this cancellation will stand, and the appropriate penalties applied. The game will not be replayed at a future date. It is the responsibility of the cancelling team to notify their opponents and to ensure the notification has been received by them and to also notify the Fixtures secretary via the email supplied on the fixtures sheet. Failure to do so will result in a further 2-point penalty. (if accepted need to add to the penalty sheet appendix)

- (f) In the event a game is cancelled by a team, the non-offending team will be awarded 20 goals. The award of goals in games that do not take place will only be used to calculate best defence and best attack.
- (g) If a game underway is stopped due to injuries or illness, leaving a team with less than 5 players the game will be considered abandoned, in this event the fixtures secretary must be notified.
- (h) In the event of an injury during a game where a player cannot be moved, and no other court is available to complete the game within the allocated time the game will be considered abandoned.

The following will apply for (g) and (h)

- If more than 1/2 (two quarters) of the game has been completed, the result will stand. If the 2nd quarter has started it, it is considered completed in this instance.
- If less than 1/2 (two quarters) of the game has been played, the match will be abandoned, and the offending team is responsible for rearrangement of the match at a mutually convenient date at the cost to the team. If a date cannot be arranged then the non-offending team will be awarded 4 points and 20 goals, the offending team will not receive deduction points.

15. Complaints

The Officers of the league are empowered to deal with any complaint arising on match days as they see fit. All those taking part in match days, including but not limited to players, spectators, team mangers, bench official and umpires are encouraged to make every effort to resolve complaints and disputes on the day with the parties concerned. If this is not possible then with a league official if one is available.

Notice of any unresolved complaints or dispute should be sent in writing to the League Secretary when an Officers meeting may be called.

16. Appeals

Appeals must be made in writing, signed by a Club official, to the League Secretary. Full details of the reasons for the appeal must be included and the President of the League will review the appeal.

17. Filming or Photographing The Game

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A request to film or photograph a match must be sent at least one week in advance from the Captain/Team Manager to the opposing Captain/Team Manager. If consent is given by both teams and umpires, notification with evidence must be sent to the league ahead of the fixture.

The filming of a game cannot be requested in writing or verbally on the day.

The game being filmed or photographed must be done in a way that does not inadvertently pick up any matches on other courts.

It is the responsibility of the Team Manager/Captain to ensure their players and spectators are aware of the rules and take appropriate action if they become aware of filming taking place.

Photographs pre & post-match are allowed, without permission, if they are done in a way that does not inadvertently pick up anyone on other courts.

The video of a match or photos cannot be used on any social media sites open to the public.

Date Approved: 6th June 2024

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Summary of Penalties

NOTE: Penalties are applied AFTER any match result has been recorded.

Constitution Description	
3. Non-payment of court fees, in part or full	- 4 points per game while fees are outstanding
4. No representation at AGM	- 4 points
5. No representation at EGM	- 4 points
6. No representation at Start of Season meeting	- 4 points
Rule Description	
4. Teams (a) Playing down	- 2 points per player on that game
4. Teams (b) Failure to stay up on 4 th occasion	- 2 points per player on that game
4. Teams (d) Failure to submit full names on Team registration form	- 4 points per team per game
4. Teams (e) Missing printed full name on score card	- 2 points per player on that game
4. Teams (f) Unaffiliated player	- 4 points per player on that game
5. Players (a) Under 14 players infringements	- 2 points per player on that game
5. Players (b) (i) Have not informed previous team (b) (ii) Failure to notify WNL in writing 2 clear days prior to playing for new club (b) (iii) Failure to re-register with new club (b) (iv) Failure to produce a medical certificate or other suitable proof, and/or failure to notify League Secretary in writing 7 days beforehand (b) (v) Failure to adhere to rule and to not notify league	- 2 points per player on that game for any of these infringements
5. Players (c) Higher league player except for 5(b)(v)	- 2 points per player on that game
5. Players (d) New players - Failure to submit name and signature	-4 points per player on each game
10. Inappropriate umpire	- 4 points if game completed, or forfeit game if can't be played
10. (a) (b) & (c) Non attendance at a Game Management Rules Course within last 2 years	- 2 points deduction
11. Late on court	1 goal awarded to team on court for every minute up to a maximum of 15 goals. -1 point if match is not played after 15 minutes
13. Notification of results (b) Lack of PRINTED full names of players (c) Lack of PRINTED and SIGNED umpire names (e) Not uploaded on the day of fixture	- 2 points for any of these infringements

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14 (d) Cancelled match (not postponed) or failure to turn up	- 4 points if game cancelled BEFORE 9 PM Friday before fixture - 6 points if after 9 PM on Friday before fixture 20 goals to the non-offending team. Goals awarded here will only be used to calculate best defense and best attack.
14(e) Non or incorrect notification of cancelled match	-2-point deduction to the offending team for non or incorrect notification to league and or opponent
14 (f) Cancelled match (not postponed) or failure to turn up	- 4 points and 20 goals to non-offending team. Goals awarded here will only be used to calculate best defense and best attack.
14 (g) Abandoned match that cannot be re arranged	-4 points and 20 goals to the non-offending team. The offending team will not receive any point deductions.
14 (h) Abandoned match that cannot be re arranged	-4 points and 20 goals to the non-offending team. The offending team will not receive any point deductions.